

EXHIBIT 17  
DATE 2/3/09  
HP 346

House Bill 346  
February 3, 2009  
Presented by Jim Kropp  
House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Jim Kropp, Law Enforcement Chief of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

I am offering informational testimony regarding HB 346. FWP has met with Representative Stoker, and we suggest your consideration of a clarifying amendment which we believe will help to focus the intent of the bill, as well as limit the potential problems that could be created for limited entry either-sex permit districts such as in the Elkhorn Mountains and the Missouri Breaks. The amendment I have passed out simply adds the words “.. an antlerless elk..” to the proposed language. This would aid in ensuring that there is no confusion regarding a person over 62 years of age taking an antlerless animal in those limited access hunting districts.

One other piece of information the committee may wish to consider is that passage and approval of HB 346 may lead the FWP Commission to reduce permit numbers in some hunting districts in recognition that hunters over age 62 will no longer need permits to hunt antlerless elk in those districts.

Finally, FWP recognizes and appreciates the problem Representative Stocker is trying to solve for his constituents. With creation of the A-9, elk B-tag two sessions ago, and elimination of the prerequisite of purchasing an A-5 license last session, the legislature has made it possible for FWP to offer antlerless elk hunting without requiring a permit. This is another way to eliminate the problem Rep. Stocker's constituent faced this year.

Thank you.

**Subject:** FW: Jeff, Meg Smith here  
**Date:** Friday, January 30, 2009 12:20 PM  
**From:** Jeffrey Welborn <jwauctions@bmt.net>  
**To:** Jeffrey Welborn <jwauctions@bmt.net>

EXHIBIT \_\_\_\_\_ 17  
DATE 2-3-09  
HB 253

----- Forwarded Message

**From:** <Tendoy@aol.com>  
**Date:** Thu, 29 Jan 2009 17:43:21 EST  
**To:** Jeffrey Welborn <jwauctions@bmt.net>  
**Subject:** Jeff, Meg Smith here

I have been trying to send you emails for testimony on HB253  
Obviously I am opposed!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Brucellosis-infected wildlife has resulted in Montana losing its brucellosis-free status, which is currently taking a multi-million dollar toll on Montana's cattle industry—the largest segment of the number

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks does not have the authority to manage wildlife with disease. The legislature gave that authority, by statute and by rule, to the Department of Livestock. If bison were to fall under the jurisdiction of FWP, the legislature must give the department authority over disease. FWP has never had authority to deal with disease and shows no desire to have that authority.

Because of the loss of Montana's brucellosis free status, as a cattle producer in Madison and Beaverhead counties, my family and I will now will be testing our cattle herds when we move our cattle to summer pastures in an adjacent county, in addition to the other testing we will be required to do.

In addition, we have many elk herds that not only spend the winter, but also year round and then calve on our rangelands. We are concerned that no matter what measures we take to do what we can to protect our cattle, it may never be enough, if the disease shows up in the elk here on our ranch.

As the crow flies none of us in SW Montana are far from the reservoir of disease in Yellowstone National Park. My question is, what can we as ranchers do to protect ourselves from the disease in wildlife?

The cost of allowing diseased bison to roam free will be borne entirely by the livestock producers in this state. The long term cost will not be in bloodtest bills alone, ultimately it will be in the loss of private ranchland and open space.

Until the disease is cleared up in the bison, and this CAN be accomplished, then free roaming bison cannot become wildlife in this state.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Meg Smith  
Glen MT, 59732